

MUSIC

By VIRGIL THOMSON

PHILHARMONIC-SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

CARNEGIE HALL

Conductor, Dimitri Mitropoulos; soloist, Leonard Rose, cellist. The program:

Overture, "Ruy Blas".....Mendelssohn
Symphony No. 2, E flat major.....Schubert
Cantata, "A Survivor from Warsaw".....Schoenberg
(First New York performance)

Narrator: Adolph Anderson
Princeton University Chapel Choir Carl
Weinrich, Director.

Cello Concerto (first performance) Alan Schulman
Joyeuse Marche.....Chabrier
Fete Polonoise from "Le Roi Malgre Lui" Chabrier

Charm and Sentiment

DIMITRI MITROPOULOS, conducting the Philharmonic last night in Carnegie Hall, Leonard Rose, playing the cello, and the Princeton University Chapel Choir gave us an evening of charm and sentiment. They gave us also, as is their custom, musical executions of the highest beauty. If the program was a little on the easy-going springtime side, the calendar, if not the weather, was in sympathy with its lack of rigor.

Beginning with Mendelssohn's "Ruy Blas" overture, an old "pop" concert favorite, and ending with two of Chabrier's finest, the "Joyeuse Marche" and the great waltz finale from the first act of "Le Roi Malgre Lui" (if memory has not misplaced the famous "Fete Polonoise"), drama, jollity and brilliance were the frame for three novelties. The first of these, Schubert's Second Symphony, was all youth and loveliness. It recalled, especially in the sustained animation of the last movement, the Bizet Symphony written at near the same age, seventeen. The whole work is delightful, a little stiff and coltish, but full of grace, too, and melody and vigor.

Arnold Schoenberg's "A Survivor From Warsaw," the second novelty, is an accompanied recitation in which the male speaking voice is replaced at the end by a male choir singing a Hebrew chant in unison. The subject recounts a mass execution. The orchestral accompaniment, an evocation of fear and horror, is delicate, eerie, colorful and at the same time lurid. The whole is everything anybody could mean by melodrama, but there is no touch in it of ineptitude, save perhaps for this composer's inveterate habit of giving to English declamation the cadences and con-

Leonard Rose



James Abresch

Cello soloist with the Philharmonic-Symphony Orchestra

tours of his native German. It is a twelve-tone piece, too; but that fact need not be considered by the listener, so direct is the effectiveness of its emotional communication.

Alan Shulman's Cello Concerto, which Mr. Rose played ever so beautifully, is also, unless I misread it, a meditation about the Jewish people. Its lines are chromatic and return on themselves in the Near East style. Its harmony is lacrymose, but solid withal. Its colors are dark and a little muddy, but sometimes also they glow. The cello writing is that of a professional, and the scoring is admirably calculated to throw the solo instrument into relief. This is a personal work and full of feeling, some of which projects handsomely, particularly an animated passage in the second movement and a tranquil one at the very end. A few sections, particularly those of a lamentation character, lack musical distinction. Professional quality it has everywhere and sentimental appeal. For all its charm and fancy, I found these excellences companioned by a certain turgidness. The whole does not quite speak out.

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